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Cape Cod Alliance for Real Democracy
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(508) 362-5172

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

April 16, 1999

Representative William Delahunt
146 Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601

MMAA-25

subject: Support Microradio Broadcasters

Dear Representative Delahunt:

I am writing on behalf of the Cape Cod Alliance for Real Democracy (CCARD) to express our support for microradio broadcasters. The Federal Communications Commission is presently reviewing the regulations concerning microbroadcasting and exploring ways to make a portion of the radio spectrum available to them. CCARD supports the position of Microradio Empowerment Coalition and has voted to join their coalition. The mission and purpose of the coalition is enclosed for your information.

CCARD feels that the presence of microbroadcasters on our airwaves is invigorating and important to the functioning of our democracy. Under the present frequency allocation system, only the interests of well financed broadcasters are served. For our democracy to be strong we need to also hear the voices of those that do not have the financial resources that are presently necessary to broadcast on the airwaves.

Additionally, community radio stations that may broadcast only to a small area are needed to foster community feeling and development. Our communities are where the pageant of democracy plays out in it's purest form.

In conclusion CCARD requests that you do whatever is possible to assist the microradio broadcasters among us to have a portion of the airwaves for their use.

Sincerely,



Stephen Seymour
Cape Cod Alliance for Real democracy

cc: William Kennard, Chairman FCC
Susan Ness, FCC
Harold Furchgott-Roth, FCC
Michael Powell, FCC
Gloria Tristani, FCC

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THE MICRORADIO EMPOWERMENT COALITION

FOUNDING MEMBERS: Project Censored; FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), CDC (National Lawyers Guild Committee on Democratic Communications); Radio4All.

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Robert McChesney, Honorary Chair.

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MISSION

**Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary**

The Microradio Empowerment Coalition is a coalition of microradio stations, community and civic groups, organizations, and individuals who are committed to working together to replace the FCC's ban on low-power broadcasting with a new regulatory setup that establishes a community based system of non-commercial microradio stations, starting this year, and carrying over through radio's transition from analog to digital broadcasting.

PRINCIPLES

The Microradio Empowerment Coalition is founded on the principle that Democracy depends on community access to information and culture and that access is only genuinely achieved when there exist communications media that are non-commercial, accessible, based in and responsive to the diverse local forces which characterize every community. Building, supporting, and expanding a non-commercial media system is essential to helping to building, supporting and expanding a democratic society. Only with a real democracy will we ever move toward a just and fair society.

ANALYSIS

The core of communication in this country, the mass media, are business driven enterprises that are based on and profit through commercialism. Commercial media have no real obligations to the public interest, no commitment to citizen access, localism, diversity, or civic journalism. The business of commercial media is to deliver (sell) audiences to advertisers for profit. Its commitment is not to educate or enlighten public awareness for the democratic good. With the passage of the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996, concentration of media ownership has increased, to the further detriment of democratic society.

Since the 1930s, the Federal Government has favored commercialism in the management of the airwaves, establishing license requirements that few grass roots non-profit community groups could ever hope to fulfill or afford. Since 1978, the government has aggressively enforced a ban on low-power community broadcasting.

Starting in 1989 and gathering steam over the past five years, a civil disobedience movement organized by microbroadcast activists has been growing, and recently, showing signs of

...ing impact. A few weeks after
hundreds of microbroadcasters demonstrated outside the headquarters of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in October 1998, FCC Chairman Kennard made a speech to the NAB in which he signaled an interest in considering new regulations for micropower broadcasting. This was good news, but people are very concerned that he has in mind primarily another tier of commercial stations.

PURPOSE AND PROPOSALS

The purpose of the Microradio Empowerment Coalition is to mount a campaign to win enactment of new federal regulations permitting non-commercial, low-power, community radio broadcasting, and to explore ways of creating a decentralized network of centers that offer training, advice, and resources for the advance of non-commercial, community oriented media.

Coalition members agree on the following points:

1. Non-commercial service
2. Only one station per license holder
3. Local license holding, no absentee licensees
4. Stations will be locally programmed. However recorded materials such as music, poetry, documentaries, features etc. may be used. Sharing of program materials and resources among micro and community stations is strongly encouraged. No more than 20% of air time from off-site feeds or syndicated tapes.
5. That licensees be unincorporated not-for-profit associations, or non profit organizations.
6. That equipment shall be "type accepted" which meet basic technical criteria in respect to stability, filtering, modulation control, etc.
7. That problems, whether technical or otherwise, shall be first referred to the local or regional voluntary micropower organization for technical assistance or voluntary mediation. The FCC shall be the forum of last resort.
8. Amnesty and return of property for microbroadcasters who suffered government seizure of property and fines. No penalization of microradio pioneers in any upcoming licensing system.
9. That licensing fees shall be affordable to all communities.
10. That within two years new spectrum space shall be allocated for continued expansion of microradio broadcasters so that any community group

that wishes to broadcast has access to available spectrum space (frequencies). Further, all manufacturers of consumer radio receivers for sale in the United States shall be required to include this spectrum set aside for microradio broadcasters.